

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel without prejudice claim 3, amend claims 1, 4, 5, 27 and 28, and add newly written claims 32-36 as follows.

Please substitute the following amended claims for corresponding claims previously presented. A copy of the amended claims showing current revisions is attached.

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1. (*Twice Amended*) Optical device for focusing a laser beam, said device comprising:

- C2
- a focusing lens upon which the laser beam is directed;
  - first means for selection only a central portion of the laser beam;

wherein said first means are directly applied on the focusing lens and defines on the focusing lens an aperture having a Fresnel number which is smaller than 2 along a fixed reading direction.

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4. (*Amended*) Device according to claim 1, wherein said aperture has a Fresnel number smaller than 1.2 along said reading direction.

C3

5. (*Amended*) Device according to claim 1, wherein said aperture has a Fresnel number smaller than 2 along an orthogonal direction with respect to said reading direction.

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C4

27. (*Amended*) Lens for focusing a laser beam, including a coating means made of a substantially opaque material, applied on a peripheral portion of a front surface of the

lens so as to allow the propagation of a central portion of the laser beam, and obstruct the propagation of a surrounding portion of beam, wherein said coating means defines on the focusing lens an aperture having a Fresnel number which is smaller than 2 along a fixed reading direction.

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C4

28. (Amended) Optical element for focusing a laser beam, said element comprising a focusing lens and a diaphragm having a central aperture adapted to allow the propagation of a central portion of the laser beam, and a surrounding surface adapted to obstruct the propagation of a surrounding portion of beam, the lens and the diaphragm comprising opposed front surfaces, having conjugated shape, adapted to be reciprocally coupled, wherein said diaphragm defines on the focusing lens an aperture having a Fresnel number which is smaller than 2 along a fixed reading direction.

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29. Optical element for focusing a laser beam, said element comprising, in a central portion, a focusing lens adapted to allow the propagation of a central portion of the laser beam and, in a surrounding portion, means adapted to separate the central portion of the beam from a surrounding portion of beam, wherein said means defines on the focusing lens an aperture having a Fresnel number which is smaller than 2 along a fixed reading direction.

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D1  
C5

--32. (New) Optical device for focusing a laser beam, said device comprising a single optical element upon which the laser beam is directed, said single optical element comprising:

a focusing lens; and

first means disposed around an outer edge of the focusing lens, adapted to separate a central portion of the laser beam from a surrounding portion of the laser beam;

wherein the entire central portion of the laser beam collected by the lens is focused.

33. (New) Device according to claim 32, wherein said focusing lens is a diffracting lens made by a diffracting technology.

34. (New) Device according to claim 32, wherein said first means are made of a substantially opaque material, which is adapted to obstruct the propagation of the surrounding portion of the beam.

35. (New) Device according to claim 32, wherein said first means are made of a diffusing material, adapted to disperse the surrounding portion of the beam.

36. (New) Device according to claim 32, wherein the first means defines on the focusing lens an aperture having a Fresnel number which is smaller than 2 along a fixed reading direction. --